

Natasha Von Imhof  
301 West Northern Lights Ste 412  
Anchorage, AK 99503  
[nvonimhof@alaska.com](mailto:nvonimhof@alaska.com)  
(907) 240-6340

February 12, 2014

Governor Sean Parnell  
State of Alaska  
State Capital Building 3<sup>rd</sup> floor  
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Governor Parnell-

Thank you for your efforts to pass HB21 last session. Since oil taxes fund a significant portion of our state's treasury, it's critical that Alaska remains a competitive place to conduct business for the oil and gas industry. My family is supporting "Vote No on One" both personally and professionally, to defeat the current referendum in August.

I would also like to thank you for making this legislative session the "Education Session." While the freeze of the Base Student Allocation has been difficult for the Anchorage School District, there have been some positive impacts I would like to share with you. Our district has narrowed our focus, engaged in department consolidation, and have conducted managerial audits in order to identify and address system inefficiencies.

I am here today to address a few items in your Education Omnibus Bill.

**Charter School:** The Anchorage School District supports charter schools; we have eight charter schools currently in our district and our board just approved the STREAM academy, Science Technology Research Engineering Arts and Mathematics for middle schoolers grades 6-8<sup>th</sup>. However, after looking at our two year pro-forma cash flow analysis, the transportation piece in the bill may cause our district to come up short in years 2 and 3. We may need a little cover to address the notion "rob the poor and give to the rich." May I suggest that preschool funding might give us the cover.

**Preschool:** Early literacy has proven to make a difference in children's education. Kids who participate in preschool programs come to Kindergarten ready to read, which gives them a significant head start compared to their peers. It's the biggest "Bang for the Buck" so to speak.

In addition, a preschool bill will appeal to the non-profit sectors. AK Humanities, United Way, Best Beginnings and many of the social service agencies will carry this torch and give you credit. We did an analysis at the Anchorage School District, and a \$5.0MM grant over two years could allow us to add 25-30 additional preschool programs, many of them targeted for low-income children.

**Technology:** Both you and Legislature have asked for accountability measures from our districts. In addition, the Department of Education and Early Development has passed recent legislation including the Alaska School's Performance Indicator (ASPI) and the new Alaska State Standards. The Anchorage School District can meet those challenges through a \$7.2 million technology grant over two years. Our goal is to-

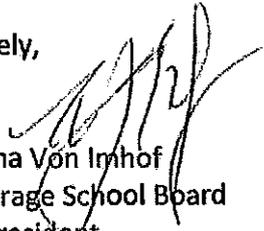
- Organize and report real time data for immediate student academic interventions
- Expand bandwidth to prepare for the online adaptive testing in 2015
- Hire programmers to consolidate all accountability systems under one umbrella to track the best return on our investment and focus our resources on those high value areas
- Design our own software programs to build a link between effective teaching and student achievement

In addition, a technology grant will appeal to the telecom industry. GCI was the gold sponsor of the Mayors Education Summit and is one of the largest employers in Alaska. An educated workforce is one of the company's top priorities.

If this grant is extended to cover districts statewide, the Anchorage School District will be happy to assist the other districts with their implementation of data management programs.

Thank you for your service to our great state of Alaska. If there is anything I can do on my end to help move your Education Omnibus bill forward, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Natasha Von Imhof  
Anchorage School Board  
Vice President

**Superintendent Office**

<b>Priority</b>	<b>Brief Description</b>	<b>Project Description</b>	<b>Estimate Cost</b>
1	Upgrades to Yosemite Drive	<p>This grant would fund the construction services necessary to upgrade Yosemite Drive, the access road that serves Eagle River High School. This work is required to finalize the plat for the Eagle River High School site. The project will be constructed in conjunction with the Municipality of Anchorage's project to remediate the drainage issues in this area. The scope of work includes widening the road, installing curbs and gutter and adding an additional walking path on the west side of the road. Funding for design in the amount of \$1.9 million was approved in FY2014 Capital Budget. This project will be executed by the Municipality of Anchorage to be combined with other road and drainage work.</p> <p>Project finish date will be determined by the Municipality of Anchorage.</p>	\$6,000,000.00
2	District Wide Information Technology Upgrades	<p>The Anchorage School District (ASD) is requesting grant funding for district-wide upgrades to wireless infrastructure and digital devices. The intent of this grant request is to provide the necessary capacity for data-driven teacher development, teacher accountability and online student assessments as required by the State of Alaska. In addition to providing the infrastructure to meet the needs of these state initiatives, ASD will use technology funded by this grant to provide personalized digital learning to students during the rest of the year.</p> <p>There are three major initiatives that are driving the need for ASD to accelerate our existing technology plans.</p> <p>The first of these initiatives is state-required online assessment. Given a three week timeframe for testing with an additional week for makeup assessments, ASD will be required to administer approximately 10,500 test sessions per day. The technology demands for both wireless capacity and simultaneous device access surpass our current ability. By increasing our wireless access point and device counts, we add additional flexibility to provide mobile technologies around the district to meet the state requirement.</p> <p>ASD's shift to a state-required data-driven teacher development and accountability system is the second initiative supported by this request. This system will allow leadership to use technology to focus and streamline professional development and evaluation. The use of mobile technology to collect and facilitate teacher observation will increase the efficiency and efficacy of the accountability system.</p> <p>By expediting the purchase and implementation of the technology required to support the state initiatives of online assessment and teacher accountability, we also position ASD to innovate with digitalized personalized learning for both staff and students—the third initiative in this request. Some areas that ASD is innovating in and hopes to expand:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) - Permitting students and staff to bring personally owned mobile devices (laptops, tablets, and smart phones) to their schools, and to use those devices to access district resources for learning and working. By expanding BYOD, we allow devices that both students and staff are most comfortable using to be extended into the classroom.</li> <li>2. Digital Learning Tools – Implementing digital learning resources in all areas of the curriculum in order to differentiate and personalize instruction. Online, adaptive software tools allow teachers to provide students with engaging curriculum targeted very precisely for individual student needs.</li> <li>3. Cloud-Based Software Solutions - Using virtualized services, we are able to provide software across any type of device with a model that is fiscally sustainable over time.</li> </ol> <p>Grant Objectives</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Increase wireless capacity by 20% across the district             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Audit and optimize existing wireless infrastructure to prepare for online assessment</li> <li>b. Purchase additional wireless infrastructure to provide access in areas of identified need</li> </ol> </li> <li>2. Supplementary Devices             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Expand existing virtual desktop / application infrastructure to accommodate online testing across any device</li> <li>b. Replace devices that do not meet the minimum requirements for online assessment, and provide schools increased access to digital tools for personalized digital learning</li> <li>c. Purchase devices that accommodate the shift towards a data-driven teacher development and accountability system</li> <li>d. Provide implementation and training support for the deployment</li> </ol> </li> </ol>	\$7,200,000.00

Governor Parnell,

Forgive me for waiting so long, but thank you for your Forward Thinking while rejecting the near federally mandated Common Core that will negatively influence our children and their education for years to come. Please continue to support parents along with local and state education administrations to teach and nurture those young minds and souls so dear to us.

Regards,

Diane and Wayne Buchanan

Governor Parnell,

My name is Todd Hindman, I am the principal/teacher at Anvil City Science Academy in Nome, Alaska. ACSA is a public charter school in its 16th year of operation that serves the needs of 5th through 8th grade students. The success of ACSA is due to its students, a group of supportive parents, and a dedicated, stable staff. Together, they have been able to establish a thriving educational program that I am extremely proud of. The Alaska Department of Education & Development recognized ACSA as a 2013 Reward School.

ACSA was one of the 31 schools in Alaska that are rated highest-performing, one of 37 schools that are rated high progress schools, and one of 19 schools that are being recognized in both categories.

Like most charter schools, we have faced many challenges including funding and facility issues. I would like to thank you for your proposed legislation, HB 278 and SB 139, that addresses the challenge of funding for charter schools. Several years ago, I worked with other charter schools to pass SB 57 which sought to bring equity in the funding of charter schools with a student population of less than 150. The passage of that legislation certainly did make a difference. Since ACSA only operates on state funding, we continue to face financial challenges. I have personally made the decision to take on the duties of support personnel, in order to save funding for class supplies and activities. With your proposed legislation, I hope that we will be able to have a budget that is more flexible and will allow our small staff to focus more of its time and energy on the classroom. I also support your call for an appeals process for charters that may be denied by a school district. Having this piece in place is yet another way to ensure that more charter schools can develop and yet still be held accountable to a school district and the state.

I am also happy to see other charter school legislation being proposed. Senator Gardner's proposed legislation would also help with some of the other challenges public charter schools face. The idea of being able to set up a charter school within an existing school is an intriguing idea that I think should be pursued. It may help spur an increase of charters operating in the state, especially in areas with schools that are struggling. The proposed 10% increase in BSA for charter schools would help with facility issues like rent and utilities costs. Other facility issues could be helped by allowing charter schools to access state and federal grants.

I think the legislation that you and Senator Gardner have provided is a first step in strengthening the existing charter schools statutes. The current statutes do a good job of holding our charter schools accountable to a local governing body. But at the same time, they provide the needed flexibility for innovative educational programs to develop and thrive. I hope that you will be able to support all of these efforts to make our existing and future charter schools as strong as possible.

It is my firm belief that professional educators and parents can make a difference in our public school system when they work together. I am proud to be a part of the public school system in Alaska and I am thankful to everyone who supports our public schools. Together we can all make a difference in children's lives.

Thanks,

Todd Hindman

Principal / Teacher

Dear Governor Pamell,

I am a parent of a second-grader in the Anchorage School District. I am writing to urge you to support giving our wonderful Alaska public schools the funds they need to keep up with inflation and rising costs and avoid making cuts to teacher, counselors and other important resources at the schools. Please support an increase to the base student allocation by a meaningful amount that will prevent the threatened cuts to school district budgets around the state. The BSA increases proposed in your education bill (HB 278 and SB 139) are far too small and will neither avert the proposed cuts nor stop public school funding from continuing to fall behind inflation and rising costs. My family is very happy with our son's school experience so far, but we are very aware that teacher cuts will lead to larger classes and a worse teacher to student ratio; this will result in teachers having to spend more time on classroom management and student behavior, at the expense of learning and the quality of students' experience. You can prevent this deterioration in the quality of our public schools by supporting a meaningful boost to the BSA that will adequately fund the schools.

Thank you for considering my views.

Sincerely,

Rebecca Bernard

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter. Charter school funding is incredibly important to my family and me, and we appreciate all that you are doing to fund it more fairly.

My husband and I are the proud parents of a child at Aquarian Charter School, a public school in the Anchorage School District. You obviously know our issues, but we respectfully ask that you continue to keep us in mind as you work through this session.

The debate over public funding of our schools is foremost this session. And we hope that you know how much we appreciate your attention to this issue, especially equitable funding for the state's charter schools.

As you know, Aquarian Charter School is a public school. We gained access to the charter school through the lottery system. We feel the individualized instruction for our child exceeds the opportunities of our neighborhood school, and better prepares her to receive the strongest elementary education.

However, the funding for the charter schools versus the neighborhood schools is inequitable. We receive the Base Student Allocation (adjusted for enrollment factors). From the adjusted BSA, Aquarian Charter pays nearly 5% back to the school district for mandated indirect costs and then pays for additional costs including rent, teachers' salaries and benefits, maintenance, and phone lines, to name a few items. Traditional schools do not carry that burden; optional / alternative schools do not carry that burden either.

As you will note, we receive fewer dollars than our neighborhood counterparts. We receive little (if any) federal dollars, no state transportation dollars, and no grant monies. That means that we fund operations with \$7,800 for each student versus \$15,000 to \$18,000 for a neighborhood school student (according to media reports).

That is why we are now so encouraged to hear proposals which address more equitable funding for Alaska's public charter schools. HB 278 gives us hope, and we ask that a per pupil facilities allowance also be included to help charter schools like Aquarian.

Please make sure that during this education debate, you remain vigilant about the state's inequitable funding concerning our public charter schools.

Thank you for your time.

Megan Steenburgh

Dear Governor Parnell, thank you so much for taking the time to read and consider my request. I am writing on behalf of the Aquarian Parent Teacher Organization. We are grateful that you recognize the value of school choice in AK as we have all

seen the amazing benefits this opportunity has given our own children. We do have huge concerns that pending budget cuts will affect Aquarian and other charter schools across the state particularly hard. As you know we are not funded the same way as optional

and neighborhood schools. While we do not wish to take away from other programs we do wish for some more equitable funding. It is becoming increasingly difficult to preserve our school's high standards when we have to consider rent and several other costs

other optional schools do not have to factor into their budget. We are grateful for your support of HB278 and hope you will look further into this issue and include more funding for Alaska's amazing charter schools.

Thank you for your service and dedication to Alaska and taking the time to consider our issues.

Sincerely,

Laura Butcher

President/Aquarian Charter School PTO

The Honorable Sean Parnell  
Governor of Alaska  
P.O. Box 110001  
Juneau, AK 99811-001

HV  
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR  
ALASKA  
110001

FEB 21 2014

Re: Governor's Education Bill

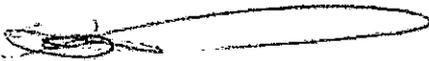
Dear Governor Parnell,

This letter is in support of HB278 and SB139. Specifically, the section on the Technical and Vocational Education Program (TVEP) and the language to keep the current percentage allocation and continue the program through 2024. The TVEP funding is vital to AVTEC operations.

When the legislation first implemented TVEP, the bill helped change technology at AVTEC in a drastic way. It allowed for money to be allocated for advancing technology and allowed students to receive the education needed to be successful in society. With technology continually on the rise in today's society more money is always needed to improve the delivery of technology. AVTEC uses TVEP to help students advance their knowledge in a changing society by upgrading technology used daily and allowing them to find better jobs within our community. The funds are allowing Alaskans to get the education and background needed in the job market and keeping them local giving back to our state.

TVEP is essential to AVTEC and Alaska's future. Alaskans have been given an opportunity to give back to their communities and not have the wait that they have had in the past at the university. This money is allocated to help pay for salaries, educational tools for students, computers, and also see that facilities are maintained. AVTEC has gained national recognition for some of its programs and this has brought more attention to AVTEC as a whole.

Sincerely,



Ida Brothers  
Student

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Teck Alaska Incorporated  
Red Dog Operations  
3105 Lakeshore Drive  
Building A, Suite 101  
Anchorage, AK USA 99517

+1 907 426 2170 Tel  
+1 888 900 1179 Fax  
www.teck.com

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**Teck**

March 21, 2014

The Honorable Sean Parnell  
Office of the Governor  
P.O. Box 110001  
Juneau, AK 99811-0001

Dear Governor Parnell:

As a major employer in Alaska and most specifically in NW Arctic Alaska, we wish to go on record in support of HB 278 and SB 139. We support the "omnibus" approach to funding education this session and see it as a way that all regions of the state, both urban and rural can benefit.

For some years now we have worked closely with the Northwest Arctic Borough School District and with the Alaska Technical Center in Kotzebue to train workers for hire at Red Dog. We see some particular aspects of your proposed legislation to be of specific benefit to the continuation of our effort.

The Technical Vocational Education Program (TVEP) has for years now provided considerable ongoing support to the funding of the Alaska Technical Center. We support your efforts to improve the quality of the TVEP program and to improve its accountability. We further appreciate your support of continued funding for this quality vocational educational institution.

As you know, much effort, combined with considerable support from yourself and your administration has gone into the development of a new Magnet School in Kotzebue. This new institution (STAR) will provide residential secondary and post-secondary education opportunities for up to 200 students in grades 11-14. An academic and vocational educational curriculum will be provided through the collaborative efforts of the Northwest Arctic Borough School District, the Alaska Technical Center and the Chukchi College.

Your proposed amendment to the State Education Credit program to include residential construction and operation costs will certainly go a long way to enhance the opportunities for public/private partnerships as the new Magnet School becomes a reality.

Lastly, in a similar regard, your proposal to fully fund the board and room stipend for residential students should lead to the proper alignment of school spending and will serve to protect valuable instructional dollars from suffering in order to cover the required housing costs of residential students.

We support HB 278 and SB 139, and thank you for proposing this legislation and your support for funding education in Alaska.

Sincerely,  
Teck Alaska Inc.



Henri Letient  
General Manager

From Justina Pelletier to the Romeike family to the high school senior suing her parents in New Jersey, the rights of the parents have been called into question in several major cases recently. On radio this morning, Michael Farris of ParentalRights.org

joined Glenn Beck to discuss the work his organization is doing to introduce a 'Parental Rights Amendment' to the U.S. Constitution and state constitutions around the country.&quot; The Blaze

I strongly recommend that Alaska enacts an amendment like this - it includes the right to educate your child in the manner you see fit; it would compliment the School choice Ballot Initiative quite well..

Thank you for your consideration.

Becky Krizan

BR

**Karen Parr**  
**949 McGown St. Apt. 3E**  
**Fairbanks, AK 99701**

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR  
MAILROOM

FEB 14 2014

February 10, 2014

Hon. Sean Parnell, Governor  
State of Alaska  
PO Box 110001  
Juneau, AK 99811-0001

Dear Gov. Parnell:

Your State of the State message was encouraging to me as a retired teacher. I tried throughout my career to reform public education, as I perceived it from within the system. My efforts did not accomplish much. Schooling is managed top-down, and highly defensive of its centuries-old practices.

I applaud your initiatives for multiple ways to achieve secondary education and to give parents more choices for their children. But I am distressed that you haven't tackled the dual problems at the beginning that create much of the later disaffection, failure, and dropping out.

Both problems stem from the false assumption that all children develop at the same pace, so that all 6 year olds are at about the same level. Our insistence on grouping children by age instead of by developmental level has put those late-bloomers at a terrible disadvantage; they feel they are "dumb" and "not good at school." This is not a slight difference I am talking about: in a typical first grade class developmental levels can have a two-year range.

Boys on the average develop more slowly than girls at first. They are a year behind at age 6; by age 11 there is a 2-year gap. No wonder more boys struggle, and don't finish high school. All educators know this. The usual solution they offer is that teachers adapt their instruction for various levels in each class. This takes great skill, and the social stigma remains.

The second problem is related. At age 6, some are already reading at grade 3 level; others have a very limited vocabulary and no experience of books. Much of this disparity is due more to home environment than to the child's developmental stage, and it can be greatly mitigated by well-run preschools for ages 3-5. The efficacy of this approach has been proven over the last 30 years. The Rand Corporation's massive study ("Investing in Our Children," 1998) found that for each dollar expended in public pre-school for at-risk children, seven dollars was saved in tax money in the areas of, for example, special education, welfare payments, law enforcement, and prisons.

I urge you to initiate planning for real reform of education. It would many years and substantial funding, but wouldn't it be good if 98% of our children were successful?

Sincerely,  
Karen Parr



# Alaska Charter Schools Legislator Information

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*Our goal is for the State of Alaska to equitably fund charter schools across the state.*

**Above all, inequity in facility funding is the largest barrier to new charter school start-ups as well as the single most significant challenge hindering charter school sustainability and growth.**

Alaska's charter schools are **public** schools authorized by and run under any of the state's local school districts. Every charter school employs public school teachers who are part of the teachers' **union**. Charter schools must adhere to all the same standards and regulations of any school within their authorizing district. Charter schools differ in the fact that they are exempt from certain curriculum purchases within districts and they are governed by a parent board (APC) responsible for curricular and budgetary decisions. If the charter school employs a principal, the principal is hired by and reports to the APC, but remains a district employee.

Alaska's Charter Schools are established under AS 14.03.250. Alaska's current charter school law allows for educational collaboration between local districts and charter schools while prohibiting outside interests from capitalizing on our Alaskan educational dollar. Even though Alaska's charter school laws offers public educational choice as well as accountability, charter school laws, as they relate to charter school funding are open to a great deal of interpretation resulting in significant differences throughout the state in the way charter schools are funded by the local districts. AS 14.03.260 dictates that charter schools be funded "in the same manner as it would be for a student enrolled in another public school in the district". However, through conversations with charter schools operating all around the state, we have determined that charter schools are funded very differently, district by district.

As parents of charter school students, we believe the following items are needed to further strengthen the state's charter schools:

- **Provide state-funded per pupil facilities allowance or 25% charter school BSA bonus, plus allow excess dollars to roll over each year** - charter schools must provide all operations out of one budget – that includes teachers' salaries and benefits, textbooks, copiers, etc. Unlike traditional, optional, or alternative schools, charter schools in Anchorage must also pay rent, maintenance, insurance, and utilities. Public schools are not permitted to hold excess dollars in their accounts at the end of the fiscal year and that prohibits charter schools from saving for future expenses. Rollover exemptions would be needed, with approval of a facilities allowance or BSA bonus, in order to save for charter school construction and maintenance.
- **Mandate that funding shall follow the public school student** – all local dollars, state funding allocations (like energy relief and safety / security grants), and federal (dollars for military families) and transportation monies;
- **Reinstate and/or fund state grant programs for charter school facilities** (Examples include: **AS14.11.105-AS14.11.120, AS14.11.121, AS14.11.125, AS14.11.126, AS14.03.263**) – provide assistance for charter-school start-ups as well as savings for future construction and maintenance;
- **Cap state-mandated indirect fees at 4% of BSA (prior to adjustments)** – Aquarian, for example, pays nearly 5% of what it receives for funding back to the school district. We ask that you establish a reasonable, consistent rate, and require transparency in the current fee calculation; and,
- **Provide property tax exemption for all properties on which a charter school is operating** – presently, charter schools on property held by a private owner [for example, Winterberry (school) – Criterion (construction company / mortgage holder)] must pay property taxes. Exemption should be provided.

### **Why try to mandate equalities on the state level?**

Charter schools are governed by state law. Those current charter school laws are open to a great deal of interpretation allowing for significant differences throughout the state in the way charter schools are funded at the local district level. Strengthening the state charter school laws regarding funding will allow equal opportunity for a charter school to succeed no matter what district they are operating in while maintaining the collaborative relationship with the local districts.

Differences across the districts are significant; funding variations range from districts that pass through all available funds (Mat-Su) or house charter schools rent free in district facilities (Kenai), to districts that provide no assistance with facilities (Anchorage / Fairbanks) and are charging above the state-determined indirect fees (Fairbanks). Additionally, districts provide varying degrees of support with regard to specialized services including special education services. That, in turn, hinders the ability of charter schools to educate children with special needs.

A data request to the state office (2/3/2013) for detailed charter school funding information revealed that the state is not currently keeping data of this sort. The only way to identify the differences is to contact each district, or even school, on an individual basis.

### **Why should funding follow the public school student?**

Currently, depending on which district a charter school operates in, a charter school can receive as little as half the funding a local neighborhood school receives. Yet our charter schools are public schools required to adhere to all local, state and federal policies and standards, open to all Alaska children for no cost. The funding requirements established by the current state laws only mandate a portion of available funds go to charter schools. We believe all local, state, and federal funding formulas used for neighborhood public school students must also be applied to optional, alternative, and charter school students.

### **What funds are charter schools missing?**

As a result of the discrepancy between funding formulas, charter schools are unable to access to the following:

1. Local tax dollars. In the current legislation, the only mandated local dollars are the required local contribution amount. Therefore any additional dollars distributed to a local district by the local municipality currently are not required to be passed on to the charter schools.
2. State special operative funds. For the past two years the Governor's office has passed on to the local districts energy relief funds. These funds have not been distributed down to the charter schools on a per-pupil basis in all districts, including to charter schools which pay their own utility costs. Other special grants and safety and security dollars are also left to the discretion of the local district.
3. Federal monies. Federal impact dollars, received by a local district that are a result of a student count that includes students attending a charter school, are not currently passed to the charter school in which the student attends.

### **Why should the state assist with facilities?**

Charter schools in Alaska are currently, by law, only receiving money for an operational budget. But many charter schools, including each one in Anchorage, must cover all facilities' costs out of this budget; there are no additional means of support. This leaves charter schools in districts that are not providing a facility at an extreme disadvantage. Currently we only know of one district (Kenai) in which charter schools are housed rent free by the district. However,

charter schools in the Kenai district say that this facility structure undermines Kenai's ability to assist new charter schools, which have recently been approved, because it lacks the capacity to support its desired growth.

### **Why should the state place a cap on indirect fees?**

Presently, charter schools pay indirect fees to their local school districts out of the BSA received per pupil. The indirect fees vary each year – from roughly less than 3% to more than 6%. While charter schools recognize and appreciate the symbiotic relationship with the individual school districts, there is no transparency with regard to the benefits received as a result of these indirect fees and there is no consistency as to the amount of the fee itself. The Department of Education and Early Development sets the indirect fees and it appears as though some districts may also add on to that. We ask that, for planning purposes, the local district submits to the state the value of services received and that the amount be capped at 4%.

### **Why should schools receive a property tax exemption?**

All schools should be exempt from local property taxes (and any possible state property taxes in the future). The current funding structure has forced some of Alaska's charter schools to seek private solutions for school construction. The private solutions are tremendously costly – hundreds of thousands of dollars a year with the option to purchase the building at today's value in 20 years – but they also come with a tax bill. Schools in this predicament, like Winterberry in Anchorage, pay tens of thousands of dollars in property taxes every year, out of the education budget, to the Municipality of Anchorage.

### **Why do charter schools need a per-pupil facilities allowance and a state-funded grant program for facilities?**

A per-pupil facilities allowance is the simplest and fastest way to get money to the charter schools which are in dire need of facility monies, including rent and maintenance. Grant programs are a long-term solution that would require investments on an annual basis to provide for savings for future construction and maintenance. A grant program would require incorporating into the DEED system or creating a new one to support charter schools. Charter schools can assist in structuring the program.

In HB 278, it is proposed that state charter schools are given access to grants under AS 14.11. However, if charter schools are pooled with local district neighborhood schools, there is very little chance of access to construction funds due to the first-come first-serve basis employed by the districts. Additionally, discussions with the district have also revealed they are not in a position to assist financially at this time, beyond simple maintenance projects.

### **Why do charter schools need transportation dollars?**

Charter schools provide individualized learning with diverse approaches. This environment is especially conducive to low-income students. Data shows that at Aquarian Charter School, economically-disadvantaged students are performing at the same level as non-economically disadvantaged students. Public transportation dollars could be provided solely to low-income families who would not access a charter school otherwise.

### **Why mandate union teachers?**

Recruiting is always an issue in Alaska. It is even more so in the teaching profession. The best teachers desire greater compensation and benefits. Right now, that is provided by the teachers' union. If charter schools were mandated to accept non-union teachers, it would not only be difficult to recruit teachers, but impossible to hire and retain highly-qualified teachers. Union exceptions for non-teaching positions are welcomed to hold back costs as recruiting is not as much of an issue.